CONGRESS'S DEAD LIBRARIAN

AMAZING MEMORY OF THE LATE AINSWORTH R. SPOFFORD.

The Brusque Mannered, Book Absorbed Scholar Whose Vast Store of Information Was at the Service of Every One —Curious Tests of His Learning.

WASHINGTON, Aug. 22.—A man who will be missed is Ainsworth R. Spofford, Librarian of Congress between the years 1864 and 1897, and from 1897 until his death in New Hampshire the other day Chief Assistant Librarian of Congress. All told he had been attached to the National Library in one capacity or another, but for the greater part of the time as its head, for forty-six years, having been appointed to a place in the library by President Lincoln in 1861.

He will be missed by a good many different classes of people here, but chiefly by the legislators. More than a generation of Representatives in Congress, and particularly the new fellows, were in the habit of leaning upon the brusque mannered, book absorbed Spofford. Yet during all the period, nearly half a century, which the librarian spent in Washington nobody ever succeeded in finding out what his politics were.

It is doubtful if he leaned toward any party. He was a student and a keen critic of the game, but he never dipped into it to the extent of revealing even a symptom of partisanship.

The difficulties underlying such neutrality may better be understood when it is stated that Republicans and Democrats alike in Congress lent ear to his wisdom when they found themselves in tight pinches. He never gave unsolicited advice, but when he was approached by a man desirous of profiting by his experience and counsel he never considered the party end of the proposition but told what he thought of the situation in a straight from the shoulder, take it or leave it manner that could admit of no doubt as to his meaning.

Nor did it make the slightest difference to him whether his advice was followed or not. Probably Spofford did not know, in one case out of a hundred, whether or not his counsel had been adopted. He was that unusual combination, a book submerged man who was yet always in close touch with the doings of the world, but he considered the affair at an end when a public man asked him what he thought of a certain situation in politics, got the answer and went his way.

He was well beloved for his sound sense and his humor and a certain quaintness of temperament and disposition by a line of public men extending from Thad Stevens to Theodore Roosevelt. He was considered one of the most learned men in the world. He was the court of last resort in Washington as to knotty points of parliamentary procedure. He wrote a standard book on that subject, and it was no unusual thing for Speakers of the House like Blaine and Keifer and Crisp and Henderson and Cannon to ask Spofford to help them to unravel knotty parliamentary kinks that came up.

He will be missed and mourned too by hundreds of Washington young men whom he aided in getting an education. He had a way of mapping out regular university courses of reading for promising appearing young chaps introduced to him who couldn't afford to go to college and who did their studying in accordance with his directions after working hours. Scores of men who were put through the mill in this way under Spofford's guidance have made good in many fields.

Perhaps he will be remembered longer for his amazing memory than for any other reason. He could not, as was said of Macaulay, remember the happenings on the day when he was born, nor did he perform such Macaulay feats as committing the whole of Milton or Homer or the Bible to memory. Nevertheless it was said of Spofford by scholars both of this country and of Europe that probably he possessed the most phenomenal memory of any man that ever lived.

He not only knew books but he knew their contents. It was worth while to see the tall, loose jointed old man with the swarthy skin of an Indian engaged in "reading" a book. What the average man gets out of a book by careful reading Spofford absorbed by skimming.

When the Library of Congress was still in the Capitol you would come upon the librarian standing in some dim, out of the way book heaped aisle, with four or five ponderous books under his arms and another opened before him. He would be quite unconscious of what was happening around him while occupied with the job of extracting the meat from the book before his eyes.

He would turn the pages over rapidly, picking out the facts as the crab man picks out the meat and often muttering to himself as he fluttered the pages. He'd go through the book to the last page, including addenda and errata, and then he'd fling it into one of the heaps of books in the aisle and "eat up," as the library employees used to term it, one of the other books under his arm.

Not a word could be got out of him, even if the man waiting to address him were a haughty United States Senator, until he'd quite finished skimming the books he held closely gripped under his arms, "for fear they'd get away from him," as was said by the men under him. Then, the last book gobbled up, in a way of speaking, he'd emerge from a sort of daze and step back to the world of affairs again.

Everything that his mind absorbed by this skimming process stuck there. This was proved hundreds of times by marvelling friends of the librarian, who could not see how anybody could get the heart out of a book by riffling over the pages in that manner.

Every time they tested him, as they often did, and often on wagers with friends, too, they found that he knew the contents of the book he had merely skimmed as thoroughly as if he'd spent a laborious week in reading it. Not only that, he'd even remember the number of the page on which a certain fact or figure, selected for the purpose of trying him out, was presented.

It made no difference whether the volume were a book of philosophy or a book of statistics. Spofford got the in'ards out of it by his skimming method as thoroughly as the reader who pondered the book for days. Even more astonishing, he could and did quote long passages, some of them in foreign languages, from books that he glanced over in this way.

The late Archbishop Chappelle and Spofford were close friends, although at different poles in the matter of religion. One day a number of years ago the Archbishop found the librarian hurriedly browsing in his accustomed manner through a new work by Ernest Renan.

Archbishop Chappelle, a courtly and affable Frenchman, waited until Spofford had tossed away the Renan volume. The Archbishop himself had read the Renan book with great care as soon as it issued from the press and was thoroughly familiar with its contents.

"Spofford," he said chaffingly to the nervous, jerky old librarian, "why do you waste your own and the Government's valuable time in such an unsatisfactory, impossible pursuit?"

"Explain that, sir, explain it," said the old gentleman, wheeling in his quick, marionettelike way upon the Archbishop.

"I mean," said the Archbishop, "picking up a book that it took Renan about thirty years to write and professing, yes, sir, professing, to find out the meaning of it, say, within the space of ten minutes while standing first on one leg and then the other and flicking over its pages."

"Tush, tush, sir; I know every line of the book, every line of it, sir," replied the librarian. "One does not have to be a mole, sir, and bury himself in the ground to read a book, like you religionists."

With a smile the Archbishop picked up the discarded Renan volume, opened it at random, and asked Spofford what the Frenchman had to say with reference to a certain doctrinal subject.

To the Archbishop's everlasting astonishment Spofford repeated in French, and almost word for word, Renan's views as to the matter about which Chappelle had inquired. Carrying the test further, the Archbishop, in the manner of an examiner, took the librarian smack through the difficult volume, only to find at the end of the test that the librarian, who had only picked up the book a little while before in wandering through the aisles, had every part of the book as pat as if he'd been poring over it in a study for days and weeks.

Tom Reed, a man who always had to be shown, used to take keen delight in exhibiting Spofford's phenomenal powers of memory to incredulous friends. Upon an occasion Reed strolled into the old library in the Capitol to see Spofford about something or other. He had to prowl all over the place before he came upon the librarian, who, standing near a window, was skimming over the pages of a three volume "Life and Letters" of Charles James Fox, the British statesman, that had just been issued from the press.

Reed tackled Spofford about the thing he had in mind, but the librarian didn't even see him, much less hear him. He went right along brushing over the pages of the volumes about Fox.

Reed, who was then Speaker, smiled his Chinese smile and wandered back to the House of Representatives. He knew there was no use trying to get anything out of Spofford while the librarian was "reading" a book.

Reed made a careful note of the work he had seen Spofford absorbing on that occasion, and he got the book and read it himself with considerable care. Two years later he walked in upon Spofford, accompanied by some friends from Maine, one day and said to him:

"Spofford, I'm interested in this Fox fellow, the English Premier, you know. Tremendous gambler, wasn't he? Where can I get some facts about his gambling? Was his gambling exaggerated?" and a slew of questions of similar import.

Spofford named, offhand, the biography of Fox that Reed had himself seen the librarian skimming two years before, in which the matter of Fox's gambling habits was dwelt upon exhaustively. Then he summarized, in about four or five hundred words, the gist of what the biography had set forth as to Fox's gambling habits, giving the amounts of great sums that Fox was said in that work to have won or lost at hazard on certain occasions.

Reed and his friends listened attentively, and then when they returned to the Speaker's room Reed sent for the biography of Fox. He turned to the part of it which dealt with Fox's gambling methods and showed his visitors that every fact and figure that had been quoted by the librarian in his short summary was exact to a dot.

Once the late Senator George Vest of Missouri got into a discussion with a Southern friend as to the production of cotton in the South immediately before and immediately after the civil war. The discussion took place in the Senator's rooms, and he had no books of reference from which to ascertain the desired facts.

"I'll call up Spofford and ask him; he'll know," said the Senator, and he went to the telephone and got the librarian on the wire.

"See here, Spofford," said Senator Vest through the phone, "there's a crazy man down here at my place who pretends to know something about cotton, but he doesn't know any more about cotton figures than I do about the wool production of the Falkland Islands. What I want to know is this: How much cotton did this country produce in the year 1859 and in the year 1869?"

Spofford named the two amounts in bales without leaving the phone. Not only that, but he named the numbers of bales exported each year and the number of bales kept at home for domestic consumption.

"I don't know what we're going to do up at the Capitol when that old boy dies," said Senator Vest, hanging up the receiver. "All the same, I'm going to check him up on this," and he made a note of the figures Spofford had given him.

On the following day, when he went to the Capitol, Senator Vest looked into a book of reference and found that the cotton figures Spofford had given him in that offhand fashion over the phone were correct to a bale.

The old librarian, always a man of great modesty, never made the slightest display of his vast fund of information, and he was annoyed when he saw that friends of his were seeking to make a sort of show of his feats of memory. One day a new and somewhat unsalted Western Representative in Congress brushed into the old library with a party of friends, tourists from his State, and espying the librarian winked at his guests and broke out upon the library's chief something after this fashion:

"Spofford, quick, now, in what year was the Edict of Nantes revoked and in what year did the Emperor Vespasian die and what did he die of, and in what year did Montgolfier first go up in a balloon, and how many Northern men were killed at the battle of Chancellorsville, and what was the production of wheat in this country in the year 1888—quick, now, old fellow! I want to show these chaps something."

Probably no Representative in Congress, young or old, before or since, ever was regarded with a more shrivelling stare than Librarian Spofford bestowed upon this one while he was firing off his foolish lot of questions, and then the old gentlemen turned on his heel and strode rapidly away in the opposite direction.

The vast store of information he possessed was available for anybody who really wanted it and needed it, but this was not the only occasion upon which he declined to permit unsalted specimens to make a rare show of him.

Asked to Stay In.

From the Hongkong Daily Press.

In Changsha the other day all the foreigners received a communication from the Taotai requesting them to remain within their own doors for a period of four days, as a religious festival was in progress, and the Taotai could not hold himself responsible for the safety of foreigners who would venture among the crowds.

MRS. HOVEY ON MONT PELEE

A WOMAN'S EXPERIENCES IN CAMP ON A VOLCANO.

Cooking in the Steam Vents of the Crater —A Reception Where No Woman Had Been—Beauty and Desolation of the Volcano That Destroyed St. Pierre.

Just fancy two New Yorkers enveloped in clouds and camping for ten days and nights within a few hundred yards of the steaming crater of an active volcano over 5,000 feet in the air; then picture them entertaining at their camp an American Consul, his wife and his daughter for a week end visit and giving a reception in their improvised home, to be present at which their guests travelled up the mountain, a day and a half's journey, and you will have a suggestion of the experiences encountered by Mrs. Edmund Otis Hovey of 115 West Eighty-fourth street when she accompanied her husband, Dr. Hovey of the American Museum of Natural History, on his recent trip among the West Indian volcanoes.

MRS. HOVEY, HER HUSBAND AND A GUIDE IN CAMP ON MONT PELEE.

Mrs. Hovey, who is a graduate of Mount Holyoke College, was not a novice in mountain climbing, having ascended with her husband some of the high peaks of the Alps and having been the first woman to go to within a short distance of the top of Mount Popocatepetl in Mexico. But no other woman had encamped on the edge of the crater of Mont Pelée in Martinique since the time when St. Pierre was destroyed, half a dozen years ago.

It was planned originally that Mrs. Hovey should accompany her husband as far as possible up the side of the mountain and if it was impossible for her to make her way clear to the top where her husband wanted to make his headquarters she would turn back and remain at one of the plantations that line the base of the mountain. But previous experience in geological expeditions stood her in good stead and Mrs Hovey was ot a passenger, merely, in the expedition, but aided her husband in many ways, so that much of the success of this last trip to Pelée was due to her efforts. Not only was she the active housekeeper of the two tents which comprised the living apartments of herself, her husband and two servants, but it was she who discovered that the fumaroles, out of which poured the steam from the crater, were excellent substitutes for a gas range and much more effective than the alcohol stoves the party carried along for cooking purposes.

While leading this wild life, miles away from the nearest habitation, Mrs. Hovey kept a diary in which she recorded some of her experiences. Often she had to kneel in three feet of ashes while she used a packing box on which to write. Parts of this diary are given here.

A great abundance of warm clothing was essential, for although the tropical heat was almost overpowering at times, the wind was so terrific that it was frequently necessary to take refuge in crevices in the mountain to avoid being blown off the mountain top. The nights were so cold that even with an abundance of blankets the campers slept in their clothes.

The food proposition was solved by Mrs. Hovey before she left New York. Instead of burdening the guides with stores of canned goods she limited the amount of canned food as much as possible and took quantities of dried vegetables.

From dried egg powder she evolved scrambled eggs, and palatable vegetable soup was made from the dried vegetables cooked over the fumaroles. Then the campers carried plenty of coffee and quantities of sweetened chocolate.

Only such utensils as were absolutely necessary for preparing the simple fare were carried by the campers. The alcohol taken all the way from New York for cooking purposes was almost superfluous, the natural heat from the volcano proving more satisfactory for cooking.

Mrs. Hovey started from New York on April 16 last. Of St. Pierre she wrote:

"At St. Pierre there is just one house at present, a sort of shack built since the eruption, with one room, which we secured. Then we began our excursions among the ruins. No one can conceive the desolation unless he sees it.

"A city of 25,000 inhabitants with street cars and other conveniences and then everything in a moment wiped out and nothing left but ruined walls. In five years the ruins have become filled up and covered and vegetation long ago started to grow. Great bramble bushes are growing everywhere."

Of the ascent of the volcano Mrs. Hovey has this description in her diary:

"May 1—After a day and a night at the meteorological observatory we returned last evening to St. Pierre and this morning at 6 o'clock the director, M. Guinois-dried mud which the volcano had sent forth five years ago.

"Near at hand I could see in dozens of places steam coming from the ground, and in many places the mud was hot, although I could see no steam. The summit of the mountain has been so covered with clouds and steam that I have not been able to see it for several days

"Coming up the mountain our servants lost one of our grips containing matches, salt and night clothes. A rescuing party was at once sent out to look up the missing property, which was finally located at the base of the mountain, where the servants had abandoned it, being too tired to carry it further.

"Our first meal consisted of powdered pea soup, which proved more appetizing than it sounds, for we were very hungry. For our evening meal a can of baked beans put up by an American concern tasted even better than the choicest Sunday morning breakfast ever served at the Hub.

"We couldn't have any tea, for we were short of water. Five miles on a straight road for water seems a long way to go, but when more than half the way is practically perpendicular climbing you can imagine the difficulty of getting fresh water. Alcohol baths are all we can take while in camp here, water being a luxury.

"May 2.—Our first night on the mountain was very comfortable. It was cold, to be sure, but we didn't suffer. This morning we saw a great avalanche.

"At the time of the big eruption great mounds and hills of mud and rock thrown out by the volcano were piled up. These are now getting dried out and then great avalanches occur. One can see great marks where the rocks have scored out huge ravines. Oh, the desolation of it! Not a living thing around us, only the rocks, the ashes or dry mud, the great mountain peaks and the clouds—everything the same color, the gray of ordinary ashes.

"This morning Mr. Hovey went out to the mountain while the servants went for water and I stayed at the camp alone. It was very weird. I had a pistol on the cot beside me, but I think I was more afraid of that than of anything, not that I was really afraid of anything.

"As I write now our dinner is cooking over a fumarole near the tent. The sun is behind a mountain peak and back of us is the volcano, out of which are pouring clouds of steam, and the sun falling on it makes a wonderful picture. I am on my knees in the ashes writing on a packing box for a desk.

"We couldn't make a fire up here if we were freezing, for there isn't a stick or blade of grass within miles and miles.

"The steam, as it is now lighted up by the sunset, looks the color of pink roses and it is gorgeous. Can you imagine being so high, so near the sea—the mountain rises, as it were, right out of the Caribbean Sea—that you can readily see the earth is round? I never was so high with the sea so near at hand before, but it certainly gives one a curious sensation.

"May 3.—Mr. Hovey is out on the mountain to-day, but I did not go as the climbing is very difficult and there is little for me to see, as he goes to study and collect rocks. I am alone again in the camp, but I am somewhat used to it now, so the pistol is kept on the box instead of at hand, and there is really nothing to be afraid of as no one will climb this far.

"It is a wonderful day and the cone of the active part of Pelée is covered with clouds, so we cannot see it all. The sea is glorious, and the sunlight touching the tops of the mountains makes them glisten and look very attractive, although there is such a lack of vegetation.

"The director of the observatory was to spend to-day with us, but instead sent his servant twenty miles to tell us that he was detained and to bring me some writing paper so that I could write letters."

After five days at this camp, which they called Hôtel Fumarole, Dr. and Mrs. Hovey returned to sea level again and were transported by canoes to St. Pierre to ascend Mont Pelée again on the east side of the crater. This entailed a trip of some thirty miles to reach a point less than five miles away from their first camp. During their journey across the island to ascend the mountain on the eastern slope they were magnificently entertained by wealthy planters who own large sugar plantations on the island and were anxious to banquet the New Yorkers at every stage in their journey.

The second camp was situated on the east side of the crater of Mont Pelée, 5,000 feet above sea level and 2,000 feet higher up than the first camp. Only a couple of hundred feet from their camp was the open crater of the volcano pouring forth its steam. It was at this, the highest point ever reached by a woman since the destruction of St. Pierre, that Mrs. Hovey entertained Chester Martin, the American Consul at Fort de France, who with his wife and daughter, Mrs. Maud Jones of Detroit, Mich., made the long journey from Fort de France to the top of Pelée to visit the Hovey camp.

This camp on the volcano's crater was the most thrilling part of Mrs. Hovey's trip. In describing in her diary what took place during her five days stay at the crater she made the following entry:

"Monday, May 11.—We left our comfortable quarters at Caport early this morning and in an ox cart drawn by four oxen we started with our outfit for the top of Pelée. We came as far as possible in the cart. Then eight negroes took our baggage on their heads and we took horses and rode up as far as they could climb.

"The remainder of the journey was made on foot. It wasn't as difficult as I expected, although it was tiresome enough. We are now encamped on the edge of the crater and I am so thankful I could get here. I was afraid I should have to be satisfied with camping on the side and I did want to reach the top so much.

"I think we shall be very comfortable here. The priest on the island and the young men who dined us yesterday all said they were going to come up here and give us a surprise party while we were in camp. One has no idea of the hospitality of these people. Even our negro servants bring limes and bananas, pineapples and melons as gifts.

"On our arrival here our tents were soon up and as the clouds opened we could occasionally see into the crater. But the wind blew so hard and the mist was so thick that it was very difficult to see anything or to get about at all.

"Tuesday, May 12.—It was a very cold night and we slept in our clothes. The mist was so thick that we could only see into the crater occasionally. Although I only went a short distance from the tent I got lost and had to call for help.

"We are having a pretty comfortable time. Of course we are wet through most of the time, as the sun rarely comes out for more than a minute and at all other times the mist is like rain.

"At noon to our great surprise the Martins arrived. In the party were United States Consul Martin and Mrs. Martin, their daughter, Mrs. Jones, and Dr. Teitzer, an American dentist. They brought with them a complete outfit and loads of provisions for the entire party. Mr. Martin and the dentist returned down the mountain that night, the others remaining with us.

"Thursday, May 14.—All day yesterday it poured. To-day the weather was better, and at noon ten men appeared for a picnic with us, bringing with them a large quantity of food.

"It was a great event for them. They had come from miles around, one even from Fort de France, one and a half days journey. We had a fine time.

"They brought a whole lamb, baked pies and cake, wine and champagne. Fancy carrying that up the mountain! The one woman in the visiting party, Mrs. J. Berrelin, was prostrated and had to be almost carried up the last part of the journey.

"I was the first woman ever to sleep on the mountain, and Mrs. Jones and I the only ones ever to get into the crater or onto the cone. It was a great experience which I would not give up for anything."

Socialism in Japan.

From the Japanese Weekly Mail.

Socialism has no footing in this country as yet, nor is there any indication that it will gain a footing, in the near future at all events. Prior to the war with Russia a small coterie of men calling themselves Socialists argued vehemently against the opening of hostilities and published a newspaper organ to propagate their creed. But they soon dwindled into insignificance, and although a periodical of so-called Socialist views continues to be published it has no influence, nor does it serve any purpose, apparently, except to furnish material for occasional comment on the part of amused readers.

HE DID CATCH PICKEREL.

Twenty-nine of Them; but Col. McCann Went Home With No Fish.

"I ought to have known better than to try it again," said Col. Joe McCann, the tourist ticket man, "but I had gone out after pickerel and of course wanted to get some. Up in Pennsylvania it was.

"The pond wasn't a very big one where I tried for 'em first, but they told me I'd surely get some pickerel there.

"'Take a pretty big sized live bait and you'll get 'em sure,' they told me.

"So I hooked on a shiner maybe five inches long. I fished with that bait an hour. Every little while I'd get what acted like a bite. I'd yank up my line, but there wouldn't be anything on my hook but the shiner, good and lively. Then by and by I noticed that the shiner was swelling up like everything.

"'I'll bet something or other,' said I, 'that my hook has just as like as not given that bait fish a case of blood poisoning.'

"So when I pulled it out of the water again I took the hook out of it and dropped it in the boat. It died in a little while. Then I thought I'd just open it and see what ailed it anyhow. I found nine pickerel in it. The pickerel in that pond were so blame small that the bait fish had caught and swallowed nine of 'em.

"What I'd ought to have done was to come right home then, but I had gone there to get pickerel and I hated to give up that way. I heard of another pond, a private one, that had pickerel in it that weighed not less than three pounds. That was big enough for me and I said I would go and try that pond.

"The man that owned it charged a dollar for the fishing privilege and ten cents apiece for all the pickerel you caught. That was all right, for I didn't care to catch more than a dozen or so and it would be cheap enough. So I went to that man's pond, paid him his dollar and went to fishing.

"'As you ketch 'em,' says he, 'turn 'em into this slatted box I keep sunk at the edge o' the pond here. That lets 'em keep alive and fresh,' said he.

"I said all right. One end of the slatted box stuck up a little on the shore with an opening in it to put the fish in. I hadn't fished long before I landed a dandy—a three pounder, good.

"'Aha!' said the owner of the pond. 'Them's the kind! Put him in the box!'

"I put him in the box and fished some more, and in a little while landed another pickerel, a match for the first in size. I put him in the box to keep alive and fresh along with the other, and in less than half an hour I had made three more catches and dumped 'em in the box.

"'I sox!' said the owner of the pond. 'That's the way to do it. Why, you're a reg'lar old hoss at pickerel fishin',' said he.

"I grinned as much as to say that I was aware of it, and fished on. Seems to me I never had such sport.

"The pickerel I landed were remarkably uniform in size, and I was so tickled that I had yanked out eighteen before I began to think that maybe I had enough. At the eighteenth the pond owner said:

"'I got to go do the milkin' now, and the eighteen 'll be $1.80. If you ketch any more you kin lay the price on the stump yander 'fore you go an' I'll git it to-morrow.'

"I paid over the dollar eighty and the man went away. In the course of half an hour I had made two more catches.

"'Twenty,' said I. 'I guess that'll be about all I want to lug in of pickerel the size of these,' and pulling up my tackle I went over to the box to haul it out and string my fish.

"The box came out so easily that I was surprised, and the reason it came out easy was that not a ding, single solitary pickerel was in it. There was a slat off the sunken end of the box, and out of the hole it left the pickerel had gone back into the pond as fast as I put 'em in the box.

"Can you imagine me about then? If you can don't speak it out loud. And on my way in I began to think. I told my tale of woe to the landlord.

"'Ketched twenty, eh?' said he. 'Why, Bill Legg must have added a couple o' new ones to his pond, then. He only calc'lated on eighteen last year. That box fer keepin' 'em alive an' fresh in is a great idee o' Bill's. Better a ding sight than any game law fer protectin' the pond from bein' fished out.'

"But the more I've thought it over the more I'm convinced that the landlord lied like Sam Hill about the owner of that pond. He never had more than one pickerel in his pond, and nobody can make me believe he had. One big pickerel, trained and on to his job, and I had just stood there and landed him twenty times at 10 cents per."

SWIMMING BATHS URGED.

Proposal to Have Them in All the New Public Schools.

In recommending that the Board of Education add swimming baths to all the new public schools built in the vicinity of New York in the future the local school board of District 27 in Brooklyn gave its approval to a plan earnestly advocated by many who believe that every child from 6 up should be taught to swim.

Swimming has been made part of the education of the children in various cities. In the public schools of Brookline, Mass., a pupil cannot graduate unless he or she has a certificate of ability from the swimming master of the Brookline baths. Not only do the children of this Boston suburb know how to swim but many of them are skilled in the work of saving and resuscitating a drowning person.

There is one class membership in which is regarded as a high honor by all the pupils of the schools and that is the emergency class. To qualify for it the pupil must demonstrate his or her ability to swim certain distances within a specified time. One of the principal tests requires the applicant to swim supporting another person a certain distance within a certain time limit.

England long ago adopted the idea of fostering the accomplishment of swimming in the schools. But they go further than merely teaching the pupil to swim. He is taught how to save life. There are over twenty thousand members of the English life saving association, all of whom have had a thorough course of instruction.

There is a public school life saving championship for which prizes are given each year. Teams of little boys and girls on the day of competition come from all parts of London. The teams are made up of eight members, and the members range in years from 10 up.

They go through regular manœuvres. With perfect step and time four members step forward and jump into the water and go through the motions of persons in the act of drowning. Then the remaining four members of the team dive into the water after them and tow the others to safety.

If a striking illustration of the good results of such instruction were needed it could be furnished by two incidents which occurred last summer within two weeks of each other. A flatboat used for ferry purposes was slowly making its way across a river in the West with eighteen men. About midway the craft was sunk. Not a single man of the eighteen could swim and so none escaped.

A couple of weeks later a boat with twenty-three girls was making its way across a stream in England. When the boat reached the centre of the stream some one rocked it and all the girls were thrown into the water. They all promptly swam ashore and there was not a single life lost.

The plan of the Brooklyn local school board would make it possible for nearly every child in the greater city to have the chance to bathe and swim. A very important part of this plan would be the opportunity afforded girls to learn to swim. Boys now have a dozen chances to learn to swim where a girl has one.

MUST SING IN GRAND OPERA

CAREERS OF SINGERS SPOILED BY THEIR AMBITION.

Two American Women Who Were Not Satisfied With Their Success in Vaudeville and Light Opera—A Grand Opera Singer Who Knew When to Shift.

There is an American girl in Paris wondering what she is going to do during the coming season in the way of carrying on a career that began with some show of success several years ago. She was a very popular vaudeville singer before the desire to appear in grand opera was made to seem a possibility by the praise of a singer who heard her on a transatlantic steamer and told her that anything in the operatic world was hers.

Celebrities have a habit of disseminating such encouraging advice. It costs them nothing and is much easier than sincere criticism. If they tell you that your voice is wonderful and so is your talent, then they do not have to answer any questions. If, on the other hand, they are sincere there are a great many things they have to explain in detail. So they usually let it go at fulsome praise.

This girl is a victim of that kind of flattery. She was doing very well in vaudeville and she had every promise of advancing in the line she had selected. There were times when she had earned as much as $500 a week, but she dropped it to go to Europe and study.

A benevolent person put up the money and the family struggled along on that until the time for the début came. She appeared at the Paris Grand Opéra as *Juliet's* and was highly praised, as everybody is at that institution. A débutante who may be said to have failed at the Paris Opéra has yet to be heard of.

To get an appearance there it is merely necessary to have sufficient influence, which is often acquired by taking lessons from a certain teacher or studying diction from a certain professor. Sometimes a pretty face is enough.

At all events this girl made her début at the Opéra and did well enough to keep on singing there for a while. Of course, there was no money in it—there never is. Nor was there any more when she went to the Opéra Comique. Owing to her lack of stage knowledge she did not make herself as valuable to the company as she might have. All this time her eyes were fixed on America and all these years there had been none of the $500 a week salary.

After a while things did go her way and the American girl after singing in concert in her own country found herself engaged at the opera house for a term of years. There were reasons why she could not be put into as many performances as she hoped. That was unfortunate. Practice was the thing she most needed, and the Metropolitan is the poorest place in the world to acquire that.

After a few seasons her career at the Metropolitan ended, a concert tour landed her in deep financial waters and she is just now wondering what use is to be made of her talent. Perhaps the best thing that offers is starring in comic opera or maybe a return to vaudeville. And think of all the years during which everything was going out and nothing coming in!

Naturally it would have been better for such a singer of minor talent to have remained where her unique qualities made her attractive. Yet her career in grand opera began favorably as compared with the experiences of other American women similarly situated, for the singer happened to appear in a rôle that was suited to her and in which she had been well coached. In nothing that came afterward did she ever duplicate that little success.

Then there's another American woman over in an Italian town considerably troubled as to what she may do during the coming season. She knew far greater triumphs than the first woman, for there was never a singer so popular in comic opera as she. It was a poor week in her best days when the receipts amounted to less than $12,000, and she got her share of the profits as well as a large salary and the honor of being the star of the company.

During these times she was always thinking of what she would like to do and she had hitched her chariot to a star. In particular she made of one grand opera star a model and without knowing this woman wrote her letters expressive of the most fervent admiration.

When she had accumulated enough money—for fast as it came most of it went just as quickly—this woman decided to let nothing prevent her from carrying out her ambitions. She went to Italy and for five years has been a prima donna—five years of constant struggle to make a place, five years of many humiliating disappointments and five years without recognition.

The years are passing, and with them the opportunities to win the golden compensation for disappointed hopes. Friends advised her that there was no chance for failure, and it cannot be said that she has failed. But the measure of success she has won is far less than she had hoped. There were years after she had begun to sing in grand opera when managers would have been glad to get her back in her old field and pay more than she had ever demanded. It is not probable that any such chance exists for her at present.

Doubtless these two women would say that Americans have no chance in their own country. Yet quite the opposite is true. The American singer has a better chance of success nowadays than any of her foreign sisters, provided her talents entitle her to stand in the same class. Success to both of these women meant, as it does to every American girl who begins in Europe, the chance to sing at the Metropolitan Opera House or the Manhattan. Both had that goal in view during the years of sacrifice and struggle that they spent in Europe.

One other noteworthy feature in the case of these women is the fact that they had light soprano voices. They had to sing a small repertoire that is rapidly growing smaller. They were expected to vivify old operas that are kept alive to-day by the voice and art of three or four famous women. If they had been dramatic sopranos with fresh voices and some beauty they might have known several years of great success.

In contrast to the case of these two American singers there is a case of a foreigner who has shown how much more clearly she realized the situation. She did not serve her apprenticeship at the Metropolitan for nothing. She was there for five years and she had the same line of light soprano parts.

She saw that she might sing there for five seasons more and never be in the rank of the big women in the company. Then her youth and beauty, which were much more of an asset than her voice, would not be worth nearly as much to her. She decided to accept an offer to appear in comic opera, although her salary at the Metropolitan had reached $3,000 a month, which meant that she was to sing ten times and get $300 an appearance.

But she knew that there was more than that for her in comic opera and she had the wisdom to decide to devote her attention to that field. She has met with great success during the last year or two, although it has not always been easy to find a medium for her. But even when her managers lost she made money.

Certainly her artistic reputation has not suffered. She is just as much of an artist so far as her acting goes as she ever was, and if she took a long rest she could probably have the satisfaction of singing again in grand opera if she wanted to. And she would have the additional satisfaction of knowing that she had a large bank account, which she would not have had if her artistic conscience had compelled her to stick to grand opera.